PRELIMINARY REMARKS,

THIS play was writ (as appears from a passage in the chorus to the fifth Act) at the time of the Earl of Essex's commanding the forces in Ireland in the reign of Queen Elizabeth and not till after Henry the Sixth had been played as may be seen by the conclusion of this play. POPE.

The transactions comprised in this historical play commence about the latter end of the first and terminate in the eighth year of this king's reign: when he married Katharine princess of France and closed up the differences betwixt England and that crown. THEOBALD.

This play in the quarto edition 1608 is styled The Chronicle History of Henry &c. which seems to have been the title anciently appropriated to all Shakspeare's historical dramas. So in The Antipodes, a comedy, by R. Brome, 1638:

"These lads can act the emperors' lives all over
[et] And Shakspeare's *Chronicled Histories* to boot [*]

The players likewise in the folio edition 1623 rank these pieces under the title of *Histories*.

It is evident that a play on this subject had been performed before the year 1592. Nash in Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Devil, dated 1592, says: [*4] — what a glorious thing it is to have Henry the Fift represented on the stage leading the French king prisoner, and forcing both him and the Dolphin to sweare fealtie."

Perhaps this is the same play as was thus entered in the books of the Stationers' company: "Tho. Strodel. May 2. 1594. [*] A booke entituled The famous Victories of Henry the Fift: containing the honorable Battle of Agincourt." There are two more entries of a play of Henry V. viz. between 1596 and 1615, and one August 14th 1600. I have two copies of it in my possession: one without date (which seems much the elder of the two) and another (apparently printed from it) dated 1617, though printed by Bernard Alsop (who was printer of the other edition) and sold by the same person and at the same place. Alsop appears to have been a printer before the year 1600, and was afterwards one of the twenty appointed by decree of the Star-chamber to print for this kingdom. I believe however this piece to have been prior to that of Shakspeare for several reasons. First, because it is highly probable that it

is the very dis-
pleasing play " alluded to in the epilogue
to The Second Part of
King Henry IV —" for Oldcastle died a
martyr." Qldcastle to